

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An access system and method for providing interactive access to an information source through a television distribution system is disclosed. The distribution system includes a television distribution network, headend distribution equipment at the headend of the distribution network, and a plurality of terminals at terminal ends of the distribution network. An input device and an upstream transmitter are associated with one of the terminals to input a command for the information source and to transmit the inputted command on an upstream channel of the distribution network, respectively. A headend server, upstream receiver, and data encoder are associated with the headend distribution equipment. The headend server is interfaced to the information source. The upstream receiver is interfaced to the headend server to receive and forward the command to the headend server. The headend server transmits the forwarded command to the information source, and the information source transmits responsive information to the headend server. A data decoder is interfaced to the terminal for decoding the encoded information from the television transmissions. The decoded information is then displayed on a display device.

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